FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER

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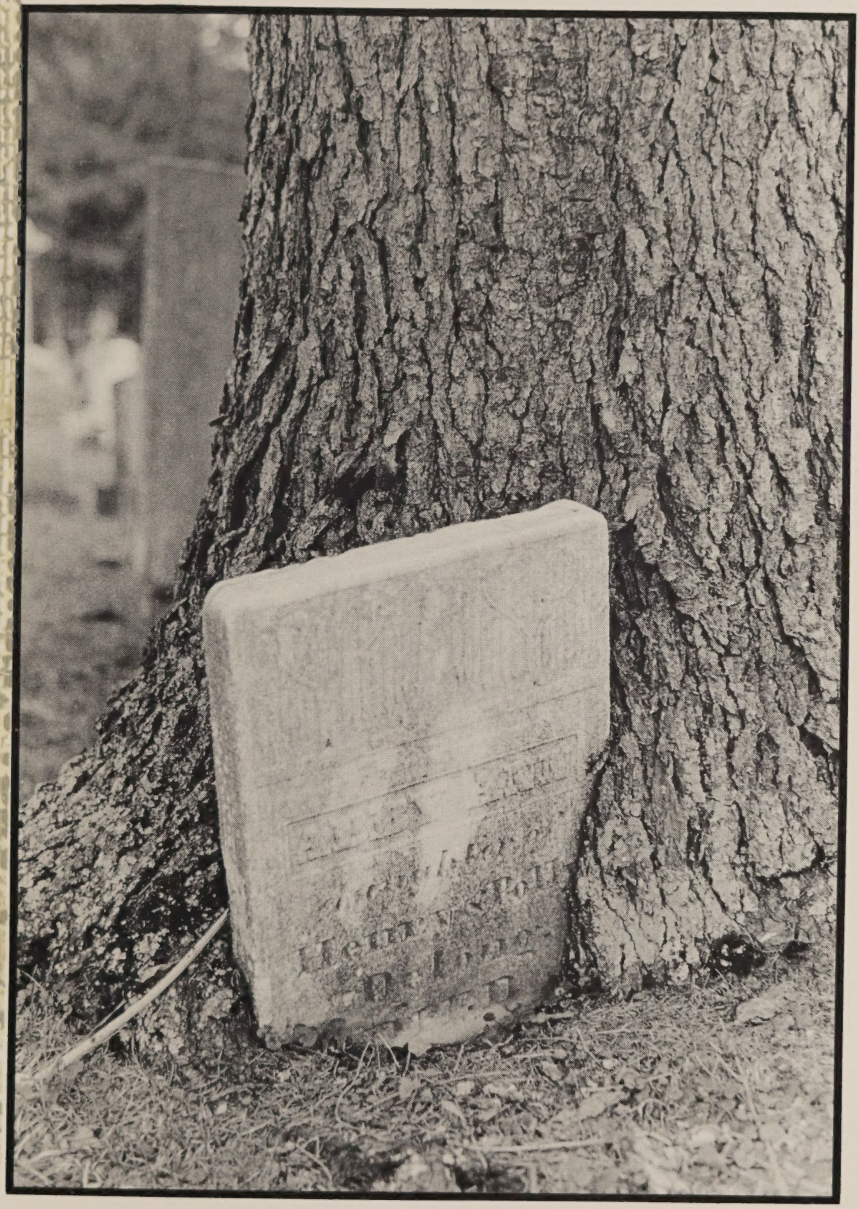


The purpose of Fellowship in Prayer is to promote the practice of prayer among all religious faiths whose fundamental belief is in God regardless of race, creed, or color, and whose tenets include the universal attributes of truth, honesty, justice, and mercy, that thereby there may arise a closer relation to Almighty God and a deeper spirit of fellowship among mankind.

From the Articles of Incorporation, 1950.

A Message from the President 2

From the Editor 4

In Tune with Peace, *by Alf McCreary* 6

Spirituality and Service: Not Even Love,
by Lorette Piper 11

Zen as Creativity, *by Perle Besserman* 15

Ecospirituality: Flood Lessons from the Midwest,
by Jerome B. Robben 20

Little Deaths and Little Resurrections,
by Robert L. Flaherty 23

For Weak Intercessors . . . Pass It On,
by Michael T. McEwen 27

"A Transforming Experience": From Self-Importance
to Gratitude, *by Andrew Vidich* 30

A Rare Commodity, *by David L. Johns* 34

Ask Angela, *by Barbara Ackerman* 38

Sacred Walking, *by Minard Hamilton* 42

Rock Ritual XIX: Seek God's Presence Continually,
by Robert O'Rourke 45

Books We Have Enjoyed 47

Cover photograph by Leila Durkin; Cherry Valley Cemetery, New York

One of humankind's newest attempts to understand the universe is called chaos theory. It tells us that the tiniest blip of activity anywhere in the universe affects everything else in the universe. For example, says Dr. James Crutchfield, a computer scientist at the University of California at Berkeley, the gravitational pull of an electron, randomly shifting position at the edge of the Milky Way, can change the outcome of a billiard game on Earth. That's scary. (Think about it!)

It's also very hopeful. It's what Buddhists and Native Americans have always understood. We—all sentient beings, everything in the universe—are inextricably interconnected and interrelated. As Gandhi said, "I believe in the essential unity of all people and for that matter, of all that lives. Therefore, I believe that if one person gains spiritually, the whole world gains, and if one person falls, the whole world falls to that extent."

Forty-five years ago, Fellowship in Prayer was founded on that same understanding. Everyone who prays, every individual prayer, has the power—the potential—to make life better for those for whom we pray.

The divine mystery that we try to grasp through the name G-d, or Buddha nature, or Brahman, or the Cosmic Christ, or the inner light, dwells in the heart of each of us. At heart we are all one in our desire for loving unity with the ultimate reality, with each other, with all of creation.

For too many of us, however, too much of the time, fear has locked our hearts against the outpouring of love which is our true nature. But prayer and meditation can help us open ourselves to the world; can give us a glimpse, a vision, of who we might be.

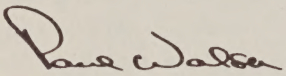
As we work with our prayer and meditation practice, we come to realize that it's not enough just to get a vision of the divine love and compassion at the heart of all religions. That vision, that understanding, must be taken out into the world and acted upon in all the interactions and relationships of daily life.

First, though, we must learn to have compassion for ourself. Only then will we come to have compassion for our neighbor and ultimately for all sentient beings.

Pray, then, for knowledge of the basic goodness of your own true self. Pray for the love that is beyond all desiring and that is whole in itself because nothing and no one is excluded. Pray for the wisdom to have compassion for your own weaknesses. Only then will you have compassion for the weaknesses of those around you. As the Quaker Robert Barclay said about praying, "I felt the evil weaken in me and the good raised up."

As you pray, and take your prayer out into this chaotic world, you will find that the slightest shift of focus from your head to your heart can affect the lives of countless beings known and unknown to you.

I join you in praying: May all beings be free from suffering. May all beings be healed. May all beings be happy. May all beings be at peace.



Paul Walsh

As autumn begins, Jewish people all over the world are observing the High Holydays, a period of ten days beginning with Rosh Hashanah, which means New Year, and ending with Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement.

The Jewish New Year does not refer to the year beginning on January 1. It concerns the life of the human conscience and might be designated a moral or ethical year. During this holy season, Jewish men and women pause to reflect on their behavior during the previous 12 months, thanking God for the ability to distinguish right from wrong, looking for errors they might have made and areas that can be improved upon in the year to come, asking for forgiveness and the strength to forgive.

At worship services in synagogues throughout the world, beautiful prayers are recited, such as the following:

> The truth within us is so rich and overpowering that we can not express it in clear and simple language. But we must say what we can, as much as our power of understanding and speaking will permit, even as generations before us have done. We know that in the course of time, others will say that which we try and are unable to say. But we shall not stop until it has all been said, for our sake and the sake of the world.

Some congregations pray famous words of the great Rabbi, Abraham Joshua Heschel:

> The martyrdom of millions demands that we consecrate ourselves to the fulfillment of God's dream.

Another prayer interprets the Holydays as a blessing, gift, and opportunity:

> Rosh Hashanah comes with a great gift—
> The opportunity to begin again.
> For no one does repentance lie beyond reach.
> The old year is gone, the ledger is closed.
> Our Book of Life is now open to a new page.
> No sins blot it, no indiscretions blemish it.
> Slowly the invisible pen begins to record our life;
> And it is given to us to direct the pen.

The following prayer expresses both the fatigue and exhilaration felt

Tom Dunham

after a long and difficult fast, which increases mindfulness of the human need to repent—and repent—again and again:

> Now the gates are closing in the heavens which have been the witness of our hearts on this afflicting, wearying, yet now exalting day. As the sun descends into the sea, we pray that it may take our misdeeds, thoughtlessness, and wrongs with it, that when the stars rise in the clear night sky there might rise with them the first and tender steps of a committed, thoughtful life, our soul awake to the brightness of the possibilities life offers us.

In a weakening society such as ours, where everyone feels that he or she is a "victim," there is a desperate need to recover ideas like those conveyed by the words "sin" and "responsibility." I can think of no better way to begin than the Jewish practice of annual self-examination and repentance. What might happen if we all took time out this autumn to fully awaken our slumbering consciences.

L'shanah Tovah. Happy New Year.

Mary Ford-Grabowsky

In Tune with Peace

ALF McCREARY

With mortar shells and bullets flying all around him, a great cellist heals wounds in wartorn Sarajevo and beleaguered Belfast.

The haunting strains of the beautiful Irish melody "Londonderry Air" hung in the thin cold of a winter's day in Belfast. A small group of people listened to a cellist playing passionately. This impromptu street concert had a special poignancy, because the cellist played outside a betting shop in a Catholic area of the city where five people had died not long before in a hail of gunfire from so-called Protestant loyalists.

But this was no ordinary cellist: Vedran Smailovic had come from the horrors of Sarajevo to show solidarity with the people of Northern Ireland through the language of music, which crosses all international barriers. His message, in halting English, was simple:

> I lived for 20 months in Sarajevo. During that time 12,000 people died, including 2,000 children, and nearly 60,000 civilians were injured. I have seen so much suffering and heartbreak. I say to the people of Ireland . . . please, no more suffering. I say to those who bomb and shoot innocent people . . . please, no more blood.

The people of Belfast have had many international visitors, but few like Vedran Smailovic.

Born in Sarajevo, Smailovic is the only son of the Bosnian composer Avdo Smailovic. His four sisters are also full-time musicians. (Moria Smailovic plays the piano, and Vildana, Dika, and Violeta all play the violin.)

Under the direction of his father and together with his sister Vildana's husband, viola player Vlado Repse, the family formed a group called *Musica Ad Hominem*—music for the people. Instead of waiting for an audience, the group took the music to the people. They made a point of playing in villages and also devised special programs for children.

Alf McCreary is Information Director and Head of Information Services at Queens University, Belfast. As a columnist and Chief Feature-Writer with the Belfast Telegraph for more than two decades, he has won a number of British National and Regional Press Awards. The author of 13 books, he lives with his wife Hilary and their three children in Belfast.

The philosophy later led Smailovic to pick up his cello and play on the streets of Sarajevo. He has "performed" outside the city's National Library, at the site of the "bread-queue" massacre, at cemeteries, and at a stadium on the front line. He was frequently fired on by snipers, but this did not deter Smailovic, who claimed his cello was his own special weapon.

When asked his religion, the cellist replies, "Musician." When asked about the warring factions, he will tell you that there are only two sides, "the sane and the insane."

He has seen enough insanity to last a lifetime. With the siege of Sarajevo, he was trapped in the city. With the destruction of the national theater and concert halls, he took to the streets to play with a group he had formed, the Sarajevo Opera String Quartet. Within months, two members of the quartet had been killed by mortar fire or snipers. Thus Smailovic began playing as a soloist, a living memorial to the dead. He risked his life daily as mortar shells and bullets flew around him. His courage soon attracted international attention. Last December, friends brought him out of the country.

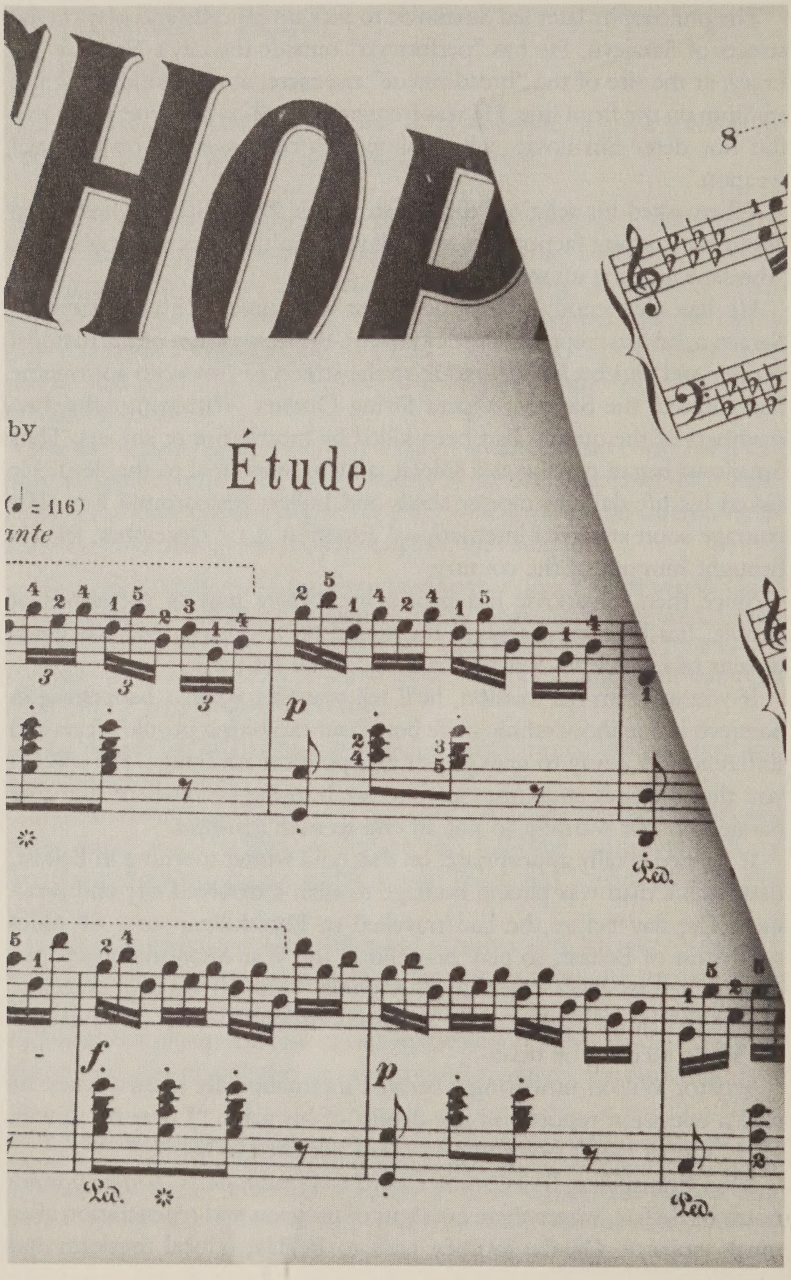
Since then, Smailovic has played live before tens of thousands of people, has been seen around the world on television, and has given dozens of interviews. Yet he has no home of his own.

If you ask him his mission, he'll tell you that what is happening in Sarajevo is not about ethnic strife but about exploiting people's fears and differences as a way to gain power and political advantage. He will tell you that the fires engulfing Sarajevo are burning everywhere, and that Sarajevo is our warning to put an end to such madness.

It seemed totally appropriate, on that cold winter morning in Belfast, that such a man was paying homage to such a troubled city and province. The day before, he had travelled to Enniskillen, some 80 miles southwest of Belfast, to play his cello at the War Memorial where ten people died in 1987 when an IRA bomb went off without warning. He'd also made a point to meet Senator Gordon Wilson, whose daughter Marie died in the blast.

Senator Wilson unwittingly became internationally known when he told a television reporter in the depths of his grief: "I bear no ill will. Dirty sort of talk is not going to bring her back to life . . ."

After Enniskillen, Smailovic travelled to Londonderry, some 70 miles north of Belfast, where there are signs of progress and regeneration after much violence. On the journey back to Belfast, a local musician and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conductor, Alan Tongue, taught him the tune of "Londonderry Air" (also called "Danny Boy"), which he played faultlessly the next day at the scene of the betting-shop massacre.

Earlier on that Sunday morning, Smailovic had travelled to Shankill Road in the Protestant heartland of Belfast, where an IRA bomb had killed nine people last October and injured many others. He took off his heavy overcoat and, despite the chilly air, sat down and played Albinoni's Adagio—the piece of music he played in Sarajevo at the site of the "bread-queue" massacre. When asked about his selection, he replied "I don't 'choose' the music as such. It just comes to me, and it seemed right that I would play this music at this place."

After he had finished, a peace worker walked across and presented him with a small plastic cup that contained two tiny snowdrops, a symbol of hope and the promise of new life despite the chilly gloom. Someone else produced a small candle, which Smailovic placed tenderly in the center of the cup. He then lit the candle and gently placed the cup on the pavement, where only a few months earlier there had been pain, terror, and chaos as rescue workers had frantically pulled bodies from the rubble brought down by the IRA bomb.

The cup with its candle and little snowdrops looked so vulnerable, but its symbolism was embedded in the Bible text pinned to its outside,

> And what does the Lord require of you, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with God?

"And what does the Lord require of you, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with God?" It was a message not just for beleaguered Belfast, but for all of Ireland and for all of warring humankind.

On the Protestant Shankill Road, the churches were emptying after morning services, and the worshippers, many of them neatly dressed ladies with feathered hats, looked with surprise and curiosity at this odd figure playing the cello. There was respect and approval, but a little Sunday morning reserve. Over at the Catholic betting shop, the street children played around Smailovic. He left Belfast with the good wishes of the people ringing in his ears.

This Holiday Season Give the Gift of "Wisdom, Love, Goodness, and Joy."

Those gifts come in each issue of *Fellowship in Prayer*, writes Tod Broderick, of Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

Many of our readers feel the same way. That's why we suggest *Fellowship in Prayer* as a most thoughtful and loving gift to friends, family, and loved ones in celebration of the holy season that will soon be with us.

Just print their names and addresses and send the list, along with your check, ($16 per subscription/$22 outside USA) in the envelope inserted in the middle of this issue. A gift card will be sent announcing your gift of *Fellowship in Prayer*, which will begin with the February issue.

Not Even Love

LORETTE PIPER

Some children have a heated home in the winter and shoes. Other children have nothing at all—not even love.

Eleven years ago, a brief and sudden grace changed my life by its incontrovertible authority. In that remembrance, I continue to find not only a call to the conversion of solidarity, but also a call to ongoing discernment, and a call to a deepening trust that God is indeed continually creating and inviting us to more abundant life. This small epiphany goes on shaping my ministry year after year; especially during my annual retreat. I return to it in prayer and reflection, hoping to come to that "intimate understanding and relish of the truth" described by St. Ignatius in his *Spiritual Exercises.*

At the beginning of my work in inner-city Trenton, NJ, I and other women from the nearby wealthy suburb of Princeton started a preschool program for three- and four-year-olds in the neighborhood, along with a high school equivalency class for their parents, mostly young single mothers. One of our first special events was a "play day" with the fifth-graders from a private Catholic girls' school in Princeton. As I watched the fifth-graders playing games and reading to the inner-city pre-schoolers at Martin House, a center serving the poor in Trenton, one of the suburban mothers who had generously volunteered to drive and chaperone the fifth-graders asked me to give her some background about the Martin House children. I told her what I was beginning to discover about their hand-to-mouth lives of poverty, violence, instability and family breakdown. This kind woman interrupted me with a comment I might have made a few months earlier: "Well, I know that these children have what really matters: all the love they need from their parents."

In that instant, I felt that all the breath had been knocked out of me. I turned away unobtrusively and went up the shaky slanting stairs to my

A teacher, writer, spiritual director, and chaplain, Sister Lorette Piper is Co-director of the Duchesne Center at Stuart Country Day School in Princeton, NJ. She has won widespread recognition for a highly creative and effective prison ministry.

office. I closed the door and sat down on my creaky folding chair. An anger, which I like to believe was a participation in the anger of God, started to work its way up from my toes to the crown of my head.

I visualized the suburban mother's beautiful fifth-grade daughter downstairs. The wonders of the world waited for her: the best of schools all the way through her graduate degree, travel, the arts, access to all the glories of culture and science. Her phone will never be "cut off." She will

William M. Stephens

always have heat in the winter and shoes to wear to church. Her meals are nutritious, and her medical care is reliable and effective. She knows every night where she will sleep. If she should ever be in trouble, she will always have someone to call. She will have many options for the use of her leisure time and for the training of her specific talents.

In a flash of illumination, I saw that it is never God's purpose that children anywhere should live the way our inner-city children live. I say also that there are certain things that will not get done unless we learn how to do them. I thought of a family story about the prizefighter Gene Tunney and my grandfather. My grandfather asked him, "Gene, does it really help to make the sign of the cross when you go into the ring?" "It does," said Gene. "if you know how to fight." Although I do not have to do everything, I do have to learn how to do something to hasten the coming of a world in which it is easier to be good, as Peter Maurin of the Catholic Worker once said.

Certainly love is the essential for human life; however, for many reasons in the inner city, love is not always available to children. Drugs, homelessness, imprisonment, the violence of poverty, illness, work schedules, or abusive family relationships sometimes keep the love that is truly there from reaching children. At the moment I realized that even if parental love were always available, I could not accept again the facile and cheap use of the word "love" as an easy solution and a sop of appeasement to my conscience. It's not enough, not even the beginning of enough, in terms of justice.

Gratitude, not guilt, must be the basis for joining the struggle of those who lack the resources to live humanly.

This white heat was also anger at my own narrowness of mind and heart, my lack of creative Christian imagination, and my superficiality in refusing to step over destructive racial boundaries and socio-economic barriers. At that moment I also realized that there can be, for me, no ongoing revelation about God and self apart form ongoing commitment to change, beyond charity, without neglecting the person in front of me.

Love persons, not causes, not ideologies,
not movements, not one system or another system,

> but love John and Mary, José and Maria. Love them so much that you don't stop at that personal level but work to change the structures that violate their dignity. (Peter Henriot SJ)

At the same time I felt not guilt but overwhelming gratitude for all that I have been given: family and friends, spiritual, intellectual and material goods. The corollary of my gratitude was the realization that everyone else has the right to all that I have been given. I knew clearly that gratitude, not guilt, must be the basis for joining the struggle of those who lack the resources to live humanly. I knew that I was beginning a task that would last for the rest of my life: to discover ways, however small and partial, to share what I have been given and to join others who work for equal educational opportunity, affordable housing, universal health care and just access to decision-making power. I found God in the unlikely place of my own anger, in the experience of contemplation in the midst of action, and realized, as William Barry SJ, has explained so clearly, that God's purpose is for me to enter into God's action of creating the inclusive community, in no matter how modest a fashion.

> We do not build up the Kingdom of God: rather we discover it insofar as we discern how to align our actions with the one action of God which is the Kingdom of God. We discover it, in others words, when we love as brothers and sisters with the intention not to exclude any person in principle from our community and when we create structures that make the universal community of all persons more possible. (William Barry SJ)

Zen as Creativity

PERLE BESSERMAN

Ordinary or extraordinary, serious or playful, soaring or plummeting, steps along the Way of Zen are always "perfect."

As a child, I was possessed by the wish to fly. Every night I dreamed I was flying, riding the sky with the birds, a wingless creature held aloft by magic. One day I thought it might be nice to fly "for real." My babysitter had left me sitting on a swing and was gossiping with her friend. When I was sure no one was looking, I pumped myself high into the air. Once my body was level with the treetops, I took off. It was just like my dream—I was flying effortlessly through the clouds. Then I blacked out, falling to the ground and fracturing my leg in three places. I missed an entire semester of school that year and had to be taught how to walk all over again; yet, for a few delicious seconds, I'd known what it was like to be a bird.

The mishap didn't stop me from satisfying similar urges to be something else, to experience, for example, what it was like to be snow. One winter, during a great blizzard, I opened the window, gathered a fistful of snow, and ate it. I was sure that, if I could taste it, I'd know what it was to be snow. A month in bed with viral pneumonia and high fever left me unenlightened but no less curious. Desiring to see what it was like to be a dog, I stuck my hand into the mouth of a neighbor's German Shepherd. Fortunately, "Lady" was as gentle as she was fearsome-looking. She nudged my fingers out from between her sharp teeth with her paw and got a biscuit for being good. I got a talking-to and was sent to bed early.

My urge to know "the many beings" as intimately as I knew myself was later expressed in play and story-telling. And still later, in meditation and the mystic transport of oneness. I lost myself for a time in a country with no boundaries.

Perle Besserman holds a doctorate in Comparative Literature from Columbia University and has written several books on mysticism and related subjects. Her most recent book, The Way of the Jewish Mystics, *was published by Shambhala/Random House.*

Kay Danielson

Meeting Zen on my way elsewhere. I was catapulted out of my dream of flying, thrust back into the wonders of *this very place,* and *this very body.* "Just eat and be ordinary," Master Rinzai urged. "That's as holy as you can get." The uncompromising non-duality of the Zen koan translated those words into experience. Flying around in an empty sky no longer had "power for the Way." Yet, grounded in the magical ordinariness of the koan, there was never a time when I was not flying with the wild goose and falling with the snowflake; or marching with Master Ikkyu through the streets on New Year's Day, waving a wooden sword and urging the people to "Wake up!"; or putting my sandals on my head and saving a cat with Master Joshu—delivering my sermon of no-birth, no-death through poetry and dance, gesture and mime.

Most people think of Zen as bare and hard. Just say the word, and it conjures up hours of painful sitting on black cushions, samurai self-control, macho shouting, and the thwack of a wooden stick across the shoulders. It's a very old stereotype, but, even in 8th-century China, where Zen took root, it tells only half the story. In fact, thousands of non-military, secular men and women, poets, musicians, and actors were practicing Zen. There were even lay Zen groups meeting on a weekly basis and doing retreats, like the one I belong to in Princeton. Such was the case when Zen moved to Japan five centuries later. Artists and ordinary folk gathered around teachers like Bassui, who would rather work on koans with his students sitting in a tree than behind the walls of a temple; or Bankei, who urged crowds of listeners at open campsite meetings to realize the "unborn" in the baying of the dogs interrupting his words.

Many of the old Zen masters were artists, poets, dancers and actors. But too often their creative practice was superseded by religious traditionalists whose connections to the world of power and politics determined how Zen was to be taught. This is not to say that formal sitting meditation be exchanged for dancing—though the great Zen Master Hakuin himself tells us that "singing and dancing are the voice of the Dharma." And dancing, too, is a demanding spiritual practice. What is needed is the kind of Zen creativity embodied in koans that entice us to fly and fall, to explore the heights and plumb the depths of what happens when we let go completely. Only then will we hear the muse singing in the backfire of a garbage truck no less than in our favorite aria.

The late Soen Roshi was famous for taking his American students out in the middle of a long retreat and dancing with them under the light of

the moon. He also liked playing Beethoven's Ninth Symphony in the zendo while they were sitting in meditation. Quite a few people who studied with Soen say his playful Zen helped them awaken to the emptiness of form and the form of emptiness that is at the heart of the practice. A poet and dancer himself, Soen's great gift lay in orchestrating a balance between hard sitting meditation and playful release. He came from a long line of creative Zen masters who used emptiness as a stage; interdependence as a script; and the many beings as players. Fukei conveyed this in his somersaults, Sengei in his bucktoothed fools, and Basho in his jumping frog. Everything is perfect as it is in this place where you don't have to leap off a swing to fly with the birds or eat snow to be snow.

Flood Lessons From the Midwest

JEROME B. ROBBEN

A priest living in Missouri seeks lessons in the midwest's long history of catastrophic flooding.

What are the lessons in a period of flooding? What can we learn when water makes its relentless advance past barriers we set up and expect to be observed by all of nature?

Perhaps one lesson is the realization, once again, that humanity is not on earth to control nature, but rather to live harmoniously with all of creation.

Anxious to live up to the contrived image of being "in charge," humanity often ignores the timeless truths of nature. Forests denuded to accommodate construction, ozone depleted to accommodate production, oceans polluted to feed our machines of motion have resulted in ecological mishaps that impact negatively on the quality of all life.

So it is not surprising that our artificial boundaries have not stood up to water. It is not surprising that rivers swell with rain, that low-lying areas must take the overflow, that flood-plains flood. That is the way nature is.

The question is what can we learn from the most recent flooding? Will we spend exorbitant sums of money to erect higher walls? Will we rebuild on flood-plains to try once again to ignore the facts of nature? Will we mouth exhortations of pioneer spirit and humanity's destiny to control the elements? Or will we learn from this flooding?

Perhaps one lesson is the realization, once again, that humanity is not on earth to control nature.

Is this the time we face the very real fact that humanity is here as a part of creation—in partnership with all the other, equally important,

Fr. Jerome, SCM, a priest in the Mercian Orthodox Catholic Church, works with refugee communities in St. Louis, MO.

Robert F. Campbell

Rainbow Falls, Sierra Nevada Mountains, California

elements? Do we now begin to value the interdependence of all of ecology?

In our efforts to help each other, do we finally learn that we are one on this earth? Sandbagging levees, donating food, pitching in to be of service—will we learn in these efforts that we are sisters and brothers in hard times and in good times?

Will this latest encounter with our natural environment be an experience in coming together as elements of one creation—or simply a battle to regain the borders we set up to keep us separate?

In every disaster we see examples of good arising. Perhaps the greatest tragedy is that the goodness evoked from us is not a constant—that when the waters subside we might return to old ways of thinking and feeling and doing permitting the lessons of the flood to recede with the water.

Little Deaths and Little Resurrections

ROBERT L. FLAHERTY

A man who has loved and nurtured his son for 18 years looks back with nostalgia at time gone by.

Just a few days ago, my wife and I, with our daughter, took our son to college. He is the first to leave the nest, a transition for him and for us. He enters into the world of adult independence, we step across the threshold of the next developmental stage of adulthood. With every transition I have experienced in my life, I have experienced pain and strength.

This transition brought with it a string of memories. I have a picture of myself reclining on the couch with my baby son cuddled against me, while I graded papers. At the time I was teaching in a little Bible College in Eugene, Oregon. My little baby is now a man. I remember the smile of my son's face the day he learned to ride his two-wheeler, as if to say, "I did it." After high school graduation this past June, he held his diploma, waved it at the video camera and said, "Look what I've got." He did it again. My little boy is gone now. There is an empty place in my heart.

I would not want to stand in the way of my son's progress. I realize

With every transition I have experienced in my life, I have experienced pain and strength.

he will do things, experience things, go places that I only dreamed of. He is so ready to be on his own. He has been looking forward to it for a long time. In the last year, it was almost amusing, when his mother or I would ask him to do something he did not want to do, he would comply with body language or gesture that said loudly, "No problem. I won't have to do this much longer."

We are proud of our son and proud of ourselves too. We have in-

Captain Robert Flaherty is a United Methodist Minster serving in Germany as a US Army Chaplain. He is married and has two children.

Paul M. Schrock

vested ourselves in his life—loving him, nurturing him, encouraging him—for eighteen years and now we see the dividend in a big way. Of course, I wish things could be the way they were when he was in high school. He goes to school, I go to work, we both come home and have dinner with Sandy and Charisa, but that is not to be.

Bob's going off to college in the United States while I am stationed in Germany has made me reflect on some other transitions in my life. My mother has pictures of me as I have of my son. A little boy with his friend pushing the go-cart they built in the garage. My mother's little boy is gone, too. I look back on my childhood with fond memories, but those days are gone. I took off to college, never looking back. I can imagine my parent's grief as I left. Then, of course, I had no idea of it, because I was set on my own adventure. Graduation from college, marriage, graduate school happened for me so quickly in succession that it was one big transition. I remember the pain I felt then. Similar to what I feel now. The past was gone. There was no way to go back. I had an uncharted future and realized the pain would only subside when I made a history in that future.

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The suggested donation for a year of *Fellowship in Prayer* is $16.00. Many readers, however, send more than that amount as a way of becoming a "Spiritual Friend" to those unable to contribute (especially men and women in hospitals, nursing and old age homes, and religious institutions).

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The Way of Prayer answers the questions of many readers who have asked us specific questions about prayer: When, where, and how to pray; what to pray for; what you can expect from prayer; how to form a prayer group.

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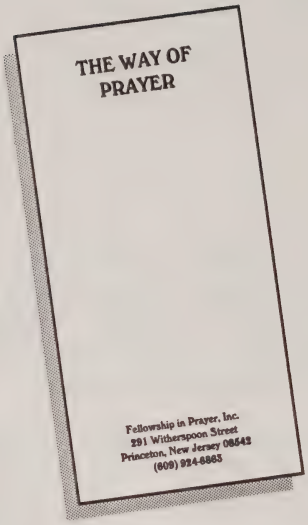


* * * * * * *

What would you like to tell us about your spiritual needs, desires, experiences? About *Fellowship in Prayer*? Use the space below!

Career transitions, moves across the country and to another continent have left in their wake cut ties and little pains. Separations from my family during times of deployment, most recently when I went to a new assignment to accompany a unit to Southwest Asia. I grieved over my own separations and over the separation others were called to make. I grieved for parents whose children would never come home, some who may never even know what happened to their families.

Today I feel as if I am standing in the void between the past and the future. I cannot reclaim the past. It is only memory. The future is yet to be. When this void overwhelms me, I practice breathing and recite the mantra I learned from Thich Nhat Hanh's writing:

> Breathing in I calm body and mind
> Breathing out I smile with joy
> Dwelling in the present
> This is the only moment.

I find then the void isn't void and the pain subsides.

I met a nurse while I was in the desert. She had her own story of transitions. As she talked about them, she said, "My life is filled with little deaths." I know what she meant, because each transition in my life has been accompanied by grief. Almost without thinking, I responded to her, "And every little death is followed by a little resurrection."

What Prayers Do You Use Most Often?

What prayers best express your joy, your gratitude, your pain, your need for help?

Fellowship in Prayer is compiling a Book of Prayers that will be a rich resource for all who pray, and you may be able to help us.

What prayers do you use most often to ask for help for your family? For those most in need?

How do you ask for the faith, strength, and courage to meet the hard challenges that come your way?

We ask you to send us the prayers that hold the most meaning for you. They can be traditional, learned at your mother's knee, or sprung spontaneously from your own heart.

Print the prayers on a piece of paper (give the prayer's author and where you found it, if you can) along with your name, address, and phone number so that we can reach you for more information if we need to. Mail the prayers to us in the envelope inserted in the middle of this issue. We will be very grateful.

Paul Walsh
President

For Weak Intercessors . . . Pass It On

MICHAEL T. McEWEN

Here is a practical, effective and caring way to connect with others and build an invisible community all over the world.

The term "weak intercessors" may cause a bit of heartburn for some. Actually, it is a confession on my part. I am weak in the area of intercessory prayer. I do my best and I ask God's help, and I'm sure that God takes my meager offerings and does what needs to be done. Never the less, I know that intercessions are my weak spot. (Perhaps I should be humble enough to say, *one* of my weak spots!)

I recently brought this up with my spiritual director, and he admitted to a similar feeling. In my particular case, it is not that I don't want to be a good intercessor, but I often feel that I'm working my way through a "laundry list" when I try to remember each person by name and need.

In Martin Thornton's book, *Spiritual Direction,* (Cowley, 1984), he discusses this particular problem. Apparently it is not as uncommon as I might have thought. Thornton also confesses to the tendency. He says that some people have the gift for intercession and others don't. Those of us who don't need not despair. God accepts us as the prayers we are and not the ones we think we ought to be.

So, with my director, Thornton, myself, and others all having this problem, what is the answer? Being the wise guide that my director happens to be, he helped me work out a solution. Instead of always trying to make the "laundry list" a meaningful prayer time every day, I reserve one special time each week for by-name intercessions. Of course, it is fine to offer spontaneous intercessions at any time, but setting aside the one special intercession time every week can change the whole dynamic of this type of prayer.

For me, my Sunday early morning private prayer time has become my "list" time. I have developed a very extensive list of specific intercessions. Some are "permanently" on the list and some are on a temporary list that changes with specific circumstances. I am finding that using this special

Fr. Michael T. McEwen is an Episcopal priest in Shawnee, OK. He is affiliated with St. Gregory's Abbey, a Roman Catholic community, where he is affectionately known as "the married monk."

Cliff Moore

time on the Lord's Day for my intercessions has added dramatically to the power I feel in these particular prayers. Of course, I realize that this is only my perception and not God's reality, but I also know that it is important to me to feel that I am praying the best I can in various modes of prayer.

Intercession every day is still important for me. But now I use the prayer that my director, Fr. Ian Riding, OSB, has written and passed on to me. He, a Roman Catholic Benedictine monk, gave it to me, an Episcopal priest, and I have recently passed it on to a self-confessed

It is important to me to feel that I am praying the best I can.

"semi-agnostic" humanist with whom I do spiritual direction! All of us are pleased with this prayer and find it to be effective for our varying backgrounds and needs.

If you are like us, take this prayer as our offering to you . . . and don't hesitate to pass it on.

A Prayer of General Intercession

Dear God and Lord of all, help me to pray . . .
. . . for those I love,
. . . for those who love me,
. . . for those commended to my prayers,
. . . for those promised my prayers,
. . . for those who need my prayers,
. . . for those who believe they have no one
to pray for them, and
. . . for those who are difficult to pray for.

Peace. Please keep me in your prayers, either by name or generically.

From Self-Importance to Gratitude

ANDREW VIDICH

Please send the story of your own "transforming experience" to the Editor, 291 Witherspoon St., Princeton, NJ 08542. You need not be a professional writer.

I had traveled many times to India on a pilgrimage to see my spiritual mentor, Sant Darshan Singh. The experience of being in an authentic spiritual master's presence is often a profound life-transforming experience. As my friendship with my mentor grew, I saw only too clearly how easy it is to err and how difficult it was to recognize one's faults unaided.

On my last trip to India, I had made an inner commitment to try to keep a rigorous schedule of prayer and meditation lasting the better part of the night. Although I was able to keep my routine for the most part, my meditations were less fruitful than usual. As time passed by they were less and less fruitful. Eventually I began to agonize over my ineptitude. Every night during my prayers and meditations, tears would pour down my face in sorrow in plight. I felt a profound loneliness, as if God had completely abandoned me. I continued to scrutinize all my thoughts and actions to discover my error, yet despite all my well-intentioned efforts, my despair only grew. My soul felt as if it were being torn apart. I felt spiritually empty and bereft of all worth.

Grace is already there, but our hearts must be open to receive it.

Meanwhile, despite the inner agony that I was enduring, Sant Darshan Singh remained distant. His indifference, however, did not upset me, nor did I expect him to lavish upon me any sort of personal attention. I wanted nothing from him outwardly.

Days went by until one evening when a group of us were having dinner at his personal residence. During the course of that rather jovial evening, Maharaji as we called him, remarked in an offhand manner

A noted poet, essayist and author, Andrew Vidich spends his spare time counseling cancer patients in NYC hospitals. Among his books are A Vision of Unity, Love is a Secret, *and* Darshan: A Journey of Transformation.

while I was serving food to the others: "Oh, look at our brother. He is one of our stalwarts on the path."

I was stunned, because his words betrayed an inner meaning. His real message, given through the eyes, was: "Oh, here is our self-important brother who believes he is a true devotee."

There could be no mistake from my perspective. His remark, uttered playfully and in perfect keeping with the light-hearted spirit of the evening, jolted me unceremoniously from my self-absorption about my own predicament.

The following morning, Sant Darshan gave his usual Sunday discourse. As he delivered his talk, he would often look down directly at me with a powerful and penetrating gaze. The entire discourse was devoted to the theme of contentment. Maharaji told two stories, which taken together, answered all my questions unequivocally. The first story was about Father Christmas. He said:

> Every year, Father Christmas gives away thousands of gifts to everyone. On this particular Christmas, he received a letter from a young boy which read: "Dear Santa Claus, you have given me all the gifts that I requested. However, you failed to give one which I asked for." When Father Christmas read the letter, he wrote back, "I can bear all burdens, but I can't bear the burden of an ungrateful heart".

After finishing the story, Maharaji looked directly at me and said: "The Master gives everything, but we must also have a grateful heart." Then he recited one of his own Urdu couplets, which said:

> I pay obeisance to the cupbearer a million times
> for I owe my very life to Him.

Then he proceeded to tell another story about an incident in his own childhood. He said:

> One time, I was accompanying my father, Sant Kirpal Singh, to Beas to see the Great Master, Hazur Baba Sawan Singh. Because it was the rainy season and the roads were muddy, the car had become splattered with dirt. We made a short stop to refresh ourselves and in passing, Sant Kirpal Singh said to me, "See if you can find someone to wash the car." I did as he requested and within minutes engaged a nearby Cooley to wash the car. I offered him two rupees; he agreed and went about his task very joyfully. After he was done, I inspected the car to make sure that it would meet with Sant Kirpal Singh's approval. To my surprise, the old fellow had done quite a splendid job. Admiring his work ethic, I decided to

engage him to clean the interior of the car as well. I was surprised that after offering him more money than before, he refused to accept it. He replied to me: "I have received two rupees for my work so far, and that is sufficient for my needs today." Later, when I told my revered father what had happened, he replied: "Whoever has such-like faith, God will not only provide for him today, but for all his needs for the rest of his life."

Robert F. Campbell

Craters of the Moon National Monument: Idaho

At the conclusion of the story, "Maharaji again glanced down upon me, smiling profusely and said: "God gives all things, but only to those who have a grateful heart."

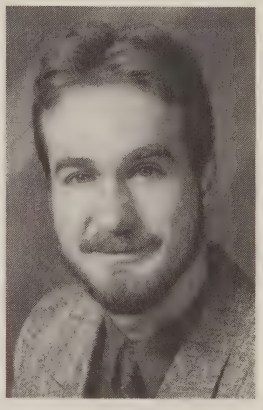
By the end of his talk, my heart had completely melted. Deep currents of bliss poured through my veins as I gazed directly into his clear, blue eyes. I was filled with an exquisite peace which drowned all my sorrows away. That moment was perfect; it was all there was. Not surprisingly, the peace and bliss that permeated me had come without any effort on my part.

Sant Darshan Singh had made it clear that effort alone was insufficient; a deep sense of gratitude was equally essential. Gratitude and grace go hand in hand as do grace and effort. Grace is already there, but our hearts must be open to receive it. This profound recognition has since changed my entire spiritual outlook.

In retrospect, I sensed the simplicity of this realization. I wondered how I could have been so blind. But as with all things in the spiritual world, contradictions abound. Spirituality is simple, yet not easy. In this instance, it was the grace of an adept that ultimately made it appear easy. I thanked God for that blessing, but also thought, "If spiritual transformation were so simple, who would need the help of a spiritual adept?"

A Rare Commodity

DAVID L. JOHNS



In silence, "the deep places of the soul are unveiled."

I lead a busy life. Each day is packed with activities like work, writing, church, family, friends. I thought it would slow down after college—I was mistaken. With the flurry of activity which consumes my days and nights, silence is a rare commodity.

Dorm life is not unlike it was when I was in college. During my sophomore year, I contributed to the noise by playing my guitar at ear splitting levels exiling my roommate to the floor lounge. My small cluster of friends and I would stay awake until two or three a.m. discussing everything and nothing from Buddhism to Santa Claus; the passion for knowing energized us like a strong cup of coffee.

Silence occasionally visited our dorm floor at mid-term and during finals week. The quiet was punctuated by moans and sobs of pre-examination anxiety or by some lunatic who had just completed his last test. The visit was short-lived and rare.

Some of us are very creative in avoiding silence. Not only do we have stereos in our homes and in our cars, we also fill our ears with sounds from portable stereos with headphones firmly clamped to our skull. When we have free time, some of us spend it at the mall, the alternative environment complete with trees and sunshine. There the quiet is shooed away by Musak and calmness replaced by commercial exchange. When I was a child I feared going to bed at night because after the lights were extinguished and the music turned off, I was alone in the silence. It was not only the monsters under my bed that I had to face on those occasions.

We miss a great deal when we avoid silence. Lao-tse commented that silence is the great revelation. This sounds paradoxical since most of us look for revelation to come through sounds or through words. Emerson once said, "Let us be silent that we may hear the whispers of the gods."

A pastor, writer, and teacher, David L. Johns lives in Massillon, Ohio. He is about to begin a Ph. D. program in Systematic Theology.

Cliff Moore

Deep rivers move in silence, . . . shallow brooks are noisy.

Spiritual giants from the desert fathers to Theresa of Avila to Thomas Merton and beyond have stressed the inescapable power and insight gained in silence. People continue to speak of its power, from the saffron robed priests with whom I spoke in Thailand, to the Franciscan and Carmelite sisters I have met, to my fellow Quakers, to my friend who chants the *Lotus Sutra,* to a reflective auto worker in Kokomo, Indiana, to my six-year-old son. Silence brings insight and it is a preparatory step to meeting God. "Be still and know that I am God." (Psalm 46.10)

Silence is part of the rich heritage of my tradition of Quakerism. From the beginning, Friends have gathered to worship in silence and expectation. Silence is understood as a preparation for being still—the means of worship—not worship itself. John Punshon has written that "Silence is defined from without, stillness from within."

In some segments of the Religious Society of Friends a time of silence in worship has all but been deserted making the church sound much like the mall and the dorm—endless clamor assaulting our ears and denying us access to divine presence. After some of the sermons I have heard

(and delivered!), Dionysus the Elder makes good sense, "Let thy speech be better than silence, or be silent."

Although traditional Friends worship is an invigorating change from the noise, it can be frightening. Early Friends spoke of the "terror and the power of the Light," which searched them as they sat together in silent worship.

When we are silent we become aware of the direction of our mental wandering; we may uncover our illusions. In the silence we may recall a hurtful word or a stale friendship. We are reminded of our need for forgiveness and grace. Perhaps in the silence God will move us to action. Such was the case with a New Jersey merchant and tailor, John Woolman. During a time of silent worship, God so moved Woolman to work for the alleviation of slavery that he left the Meeting for Worship so as to begin immediately.

In silence we not only come face to face with ourself but also with God, and a good many of us would rather not face either. We do not walk away from such meetings without transformation. In fact, it is much safer to believe about God than it is to bother with what William James called, "knowledge of acquaintance," i.e. knowing God intimately and immediately. It is much less threatening to formulate doctrinal statements and keep God within the boundaries of a civil or domesticated system than it is to draw near to God.

It is not surprising that to be silent requires that we trust. There must be a basic trust that we will not be annihilated by the silence. Although we do not leave the silence without changing there needs to be a trust that we may encounter God in the silence and that God is the One who loves us profoundly.

"Deep rivers move in silence," said Samuel Butler, "shallow brooks are noisy." If deepening our faith is the desire of our heart, then we need to quiet ourself before the presence of God. Prayer, the faithful's "language of suffering and hope" (as Rahner and Metz say) is dialogue not monologue. There must be a time when we cease to speak and begin to listen. God needs space to speak. The hope of the expectant heart is that God not only has spoken in the past, but that God continues to speak and that we may hear and know in the depth of our soul. Without such hope, we are functional deists, living as if God does not care.

The deep places of our soul are unveiled as we peel away the layers of distraction, wandering, and clutter that encase it. This we do in the silence. As these things come to our attention we "bring them into the

Light," as Quakers like to say. We place them before God and begin the process of casting off those things which "hinder and entangle." (Hebrews 12.1)

We are very busy and we may find it difficult to just "be" and not to "do." Silence is a rare commodity. Yet, the power of a soul touched by God in moments of silence is beyond parallel. As the writer of the *Imitation of Christ* counseled centuries ago, "Blessed is the one who is glad to have time to spare for God."

Ask Angela

BARBARA ACKERMAN

Do you have a question of the heart or spirit that needs attention? Angela, our canine sage-in-residence, would love to help. Please write to her in care of FiP, 291 Witherspoon Street, Princeton, NJ 08542, and she will give you her answer in our next issue.

Dear Angela,

For several months now, I have been experiencing a lack of appreciation at work and in my personal life as well. Could you share with us your thoughts and insights concerning the place appreciation has in our lives?

Sincerely,
Unappreciated

Dear Unappreciated,

Thank you for your question. It affords me an opportunity to discuss a subject close to my heart. One of my talents appears to be a keen ability to elicit genuine appreciation from those I live with by using effective but beguiling means. I, like you, and just about every other soul on the planet as well, need appreciation from others. We survive on air, water, and food. With appreciation, we thrive. My buddy Barbara has a friend who recently shared with us this vignette. My buddy's friend had just completed a very long, busy, intense, and stressful workday. At its conclusion she turned to her boss and in an upbeat, light-hearted manner she asked, "Well, Coach, did I make the varsity team today?" The boss replied, "No, you didn't. You just did what you were supposed to do."

I see this little vignette as a sad one. Here is someone in need of a bit of acknowledgement from a superior after a hard day, and here an opportunity to be a little kind is missed. A simple "Thank you" or even "Yeah, you made the team" might have been the generous response. Keep in mind that even though Lassie may know she is a good girl, she cannot pat her own head. Perhaps this vignette can help all of us who crave appreciation be a bit more sensitive to the power appreciation can have in our lives. Appreciation is something we can all give to each

other. Paychecks and cheese sauce aren't everything, nor are they always the reason we give our heartfelt best. A head pat may be more effective in creating a happy workplace or family group than biscuits or fringe benefits.

There is a sadness and a reason to bark whenever we give our best and our input and contribution is not adequately received or honored. When this happens time after time, it can send even the most self-propelled soul underneath the living room couch or down to the basement to escape into nap-land.

I know for me, even macaroni-and-cheese sauce doesn't feel like a full and complete acknowledgement of my contributions toward a happy family. Sometimes even I, a canine guru, am left wondering, "So where's the beef?" We all long to hear words like "Good girl," "Sweetie," "Well done," "Good work," "You're great." Appreciative words are important to speak, vital to hear. Appreciation keeps the "want-to" factor high, which in turn contributes toward merriment and energy.

If you are not feeling appreciated, you may be feeling cranky and/or sad about it. Since it's pretty hard to feel appreciation when you're feeling mad or sad, it's best to bark and howl about that long and hard. First, go out now and howl at the moon. Come back to this column when you're done. When appreciation does come, you'll want to be fully present and available.

Second, you will need to let go of any guilt you may be feeling about needing appreciation from an outside source. Stop thinking that appreciating yourself or carrying on stoically without any appreciation should be okay with you, it's basically just bunk. Sure, go ahead—appreciate yourself. Meanwhile, be tall and stand proud about asking for the appreciation you crave and deserve from out there.

Next, you will want to examine what it would take for you to feel appreciated. For me, it may be a friendly invite to sit beside someone on the couch, or a long, luxurious chest rub. It might also be a simple head pat and a genuine "Good girl." It's time for you to make your own list.

When seeking appreciation, it's very important to be in the mood to receive it. There is nothing worse than missing an appreciative moment because you weren't paying attention or you were out gnawing on an old bone. When appreciation is being dished out, it's appropriate to putter playfully over to the place where it is being served.

It's equally important to notice that you are being appreciated. It is

Michelle Boyd

also important to respond with glee and grace anytime you are appreciated. Souls are less likely to appreciate other souls who behave like a grumbling sourpuss.

When no appreciation is forthcoming, as in the vignette I mentioned earlier, it is possible and even permissible to ask for some. Be bold enough to insist on it. My family does not lovingly refer to me as *El Exigente*—the demanding one—for no reason. Keep in mind that the barking dog gets the bone. When nothing less than a chest rub will do, a well-placed nudge with the muzzle on a human arm works wonders. If necessary, feel free to be a nuisance or a nudge.

Find souls who value and practice the high art of appreciation in their daily lives. If you want your head patted, praying for head pats from souls who never under any circumstances pat heads is valiant but useless. By all means, pray for head pats; but seek out souls who pat heads.

It may be time to leave the wishing and hoping for appreciation behind you. It may be time for the four-pawed approach. It may be time to appreciate! It may be the moment to nourish and release the little appreciator inside you. Send out to the universe that which you hope for for yourself. Give to the world unselfishly just the very thing you want for you.

I do not know what to call this scientific phenomenon. I can only share with you my own simple observations on this matter. Whenever I lick my buddy's nose, I always receive at least one genuine "Good girl" in return. If I place one paw on my buddy's arm, I always receive a kiss on my nose and a luxurious chest rub in return.

To all those who long for appreciation from others, I encourage you to forgive those who have let you down in the past and to muster your own courage to begin again. I encourage all those in need of appreciation to be a teacher of appreciation to those unable to give it to others. I encourage you to be a first-class appreciator of all those around you. I wish everyone the appreciation they deserve.

Faithfully,
Angela

Sacred Walking

MINARD HAMILTON

A sudden glimpse of holy ground shows that the Spirit often works through surprises.

Several times in my life I have experienced what I call "sacred walking." Just recently, during a conference for yoga teachers, I was walking across the impeccably manicured soccer fields of a New England college when I felt my relationship to the earth shift radically. Suddenly, I was flooded with a sense that the earth I walked on was sacred. This idea did not come like a tidily packaged abstract thought, but like a jolt of energy that sprang into and vibrated throughout my being.

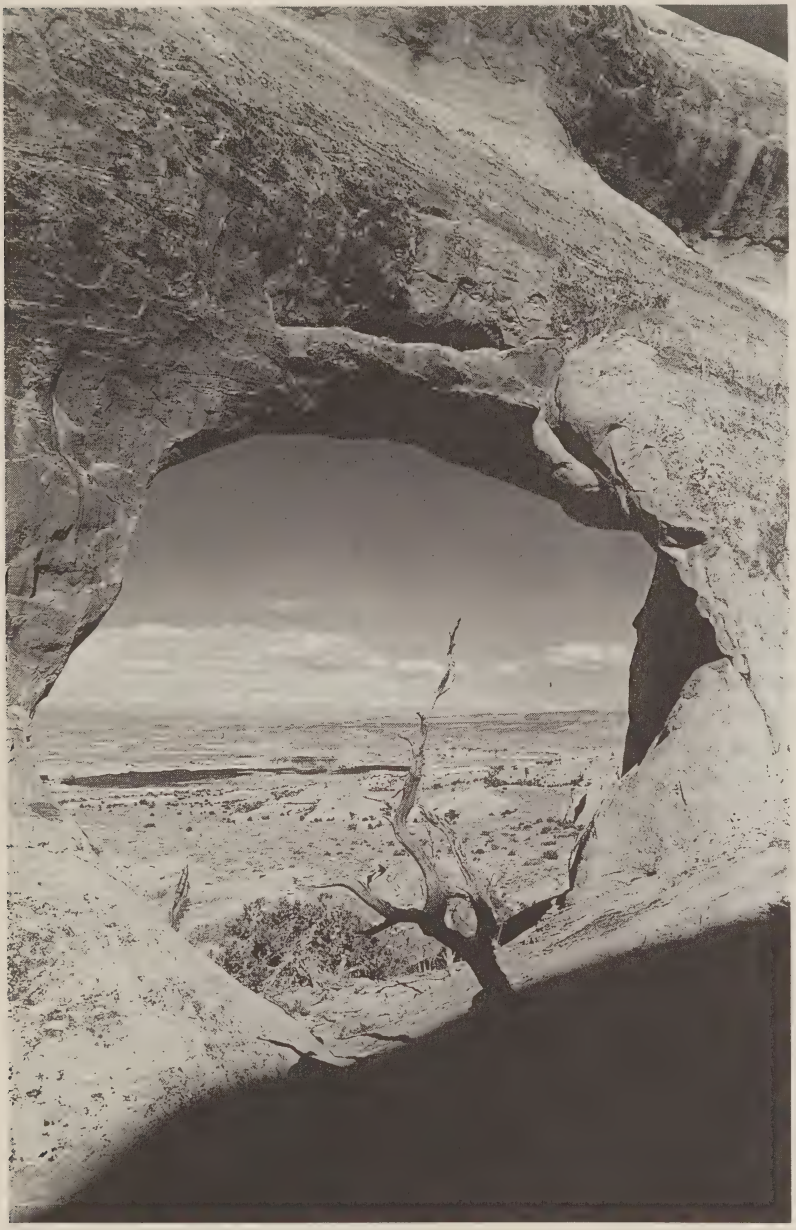
In that moment I knew I was absolutely whole, full to the brim. I felt a sense of euphoria, or innocence. Everything around me was intensely beautiful. The world was perfect. I was perfect. I lacked nothing.

I savored the moment. Then, always quick to analyze, I asked, "Okay, what are the implications of walking on sacred earth?" Revelations of knowing started to wash over me. If I am walking on sacred grass, I thought, then each blade of grass is sacred. I looked at my feet, observing the tiny stems of green. Each and every blade of grass? All of these years of hiking, picnicking, or sitting on a lawn chatting with friends, countless blades of grass had been sacred and I hadn't know it! At least, not known as a deep knowing in the heart of my soul.

I looked around in a state of wonder as I continued the litany. "The bark of the trees is sacred. The leaves are sacred. The shadows of the clouds moving across the green backs of the mountains are sacred. The mountains are sacred. The sky is sacred."

And then, in the distance, I saw a jogger and was startled by my awareness of that person's sacredness. An even more soul-shaking knowing followed: "Everybody on the subway in Brooklyn is sacred." Oh, what if I were to truly feel that belief deep in my body, instead of just holding it as an impersonal, abstract thought? How would that change my experience of a subway ride? How would it change my experience of living in Brooklyn?

A New York writer and environmental consultant, Minard Hamilton also teaches yoga.



Robert F. Campbell

Arches National Park, Utah

This thought was scary enough to jolt me out of my transcendent state. The sense of sacredness retreated. I was once again surrounded by an ordinary jogger, by ordinary grass, trees, clouds, mountains.

What had made me open to receive those resplendent moments? At the time I thought it came from being immersed in a series of yoga classes and meditation workshops. I had been surrounded by caring and love at the conference—the love of teachers and fellow students. My heart was unusually open.

Also I was experiencing deep thankfulness for being a healthy, whole person. On the way to the soccer fields I had passed a woman walking

Everything around me was intensely beautiful.

her dog. She was a young woman with a sensitive, pretty face. But her arms were non-arms. Only a few inches below her shoulders the two appendages shrank into long thin strips of skin.

I felt a rush of compassion for the woman with her handicap, then a sense of profound gratitude for my own arms. I had two strong, perfect arms—had had them for my entire life. How much I had taken for granted all the years leading up to this moment! It was only three or four minutes after this encounter that I found myself in the soccer field and had my experience of sacred walking.

Perhaps these events helped to prepare me for the experience of sacred walking, but I realize as I write that I cannot put a specific finger on causality here. At any given moment, we are the sum total of all our previous experiences. Undoubtedly, years of reading Thich Nhat Hanh and Thomas Merton, practicing mindfulness, spiritual retreats, meditating, prayer, teaching yoga, all played a role in preparing me.

However, on a thousand occasions I have walked in a beautiful place, felt grateful and had an open heart, yet sacred walking did not happen. I know sacred walking cannot be plumbed. It is beyond the linear thinking of the rational mind. It is beyond causality. And although I yearn to know what I can do to spring into that miraculous state once again, in fact, there is nothing I can do, but have faith and wait for this utterly mysterious gift from God.

Rock Ritual XIX: Seek God's Presence Continually

ROBERT O'ROURKE

God is present in every way all day long—but do we really want to remember that?

Rocks and stones endure; God abides. This may be one reason why rocks and stones are linked to the presence of God throughout the Old Testament:

> Noah builds a stone altar . . .
> Moses accepts two tablets of stone . . .
> Joshua erects a stone monument . . .
> Samuel raises a stone memorial.

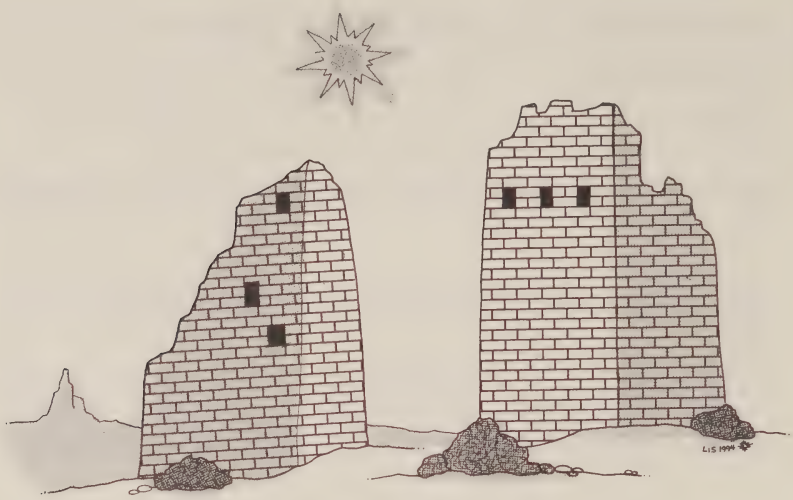
Each stone became a symbol, an icon of remembrance invoking specific memories of God's Presence in the everyday life of people. Necessary for those more primitive times; even more needed in our era, when we dimly hear the Psalmist counseling above the clatter of modern living, "Seek the Lord and his strength . . . seek God's Presence continually." (Ps. 105.3-4)

Many of us today desire the sure companionship of God . . . to be more aware of an intimate presence . . . to gain "strength" for living. The words of Anthony Bloom, while not written in stone, have given me a way to experience God. He reminds me, first, I have no right to complain about the absence of God because I am a great deal more absent from God than God ever is from me! Bloom's method is simple, "if you are simple enough to do it."

> Awake in the morning and the first thing you do is thank God for it, even if you don't feel particularly happy about the day to come. This day the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be happy in it. Ask God to bless this day, that everything in it should be blessed and ruled by God.
> Every person you meet is a gift of God . . . whether you like or dislike it.*

A writer and poet, Bob O'Rourke resides in Colorado. The illustration accompanying his article is by the Colorado artist, Lisa Smith.

* Quoted from *Beginning to Pray,* by Anthony Bloom, Paulist Press, 1970.



Lisa Smith

With a chuckle, Bloom adds that most of us cannot endure being with God continuously. God knows that perfectly well. So we begin our devotion by selecting one or two experiences in each day and put all our energy into them. After that you may have to say to God, "I'll just have to rest . . . for a moment I accept to be less saintly." Thank you, Anthony, I asked for a loaf; you didn't give me a stone.

THE PARABOLA BOOK OF HEALING
Continuum, New York, 1994, 228 pages, hardcover, $22.95.

What is the difference between "curing" and "healing"? Between traditional Western medicine, with its strong reliance on science, and more holistic approaches that take serious account of our mental, emotional, and spiritual condition? What can we learn from sickness and disease? What do they tell us about ourselves and what we must do to become whole again?

The thirty or so authors whose experiences with these questions fill this fascinating new book come from a wide range of cultural, scientific, and spiritual traditions, and include such familiar names as Lewis Thomas, Norman Cousins, Thich Nhat Hanh and Carl Jung. My own favorites, which I urge you not to miss, are the satisfyingly long interviews with Helen Luke, the Jungian counselor and founder of the Apple Farm Community in Michigan, and with Lobsang Ragpay, the former director of the Tibetan Holistic Medical Center in New Delhi, who is presently doing post-doctoral research in psychology at UCLA. *PW*

THE REINVENTION OF WORK: A NEW VISION OF LIVELIHOOD FOR OUR TIME,
by Matthew Fox, HarperSan Francisco, 1994, 342 pages, hardcover, $22.00.

Another dazzling book from the revolutionary priest fired by the Vatican for allegedly "devious and dangerous" ideas! Now an Anglican priest committed as ever to the Cosmic Christ, Matthew Fox continues to make history with his radically bold and innovative thinking—and the immeasurable passion he pours into social transformation. Now that he has revitalized Creation Spirituality, he wants Creation Spirituality to revitalize culture.

Applied to the world of livelihood, Creation thought insists that work has to do with living in depth, with pleasure and joy, and a sense of purpose. Much about work doesn't work, however, and most people feel crushed and defeated on the job. Unemployment, underemployment, on-the-job indignities, work addiction "can grind us to dust," Fox writes.

Is it then reckless to hope for a happier work place? This book, from a brilliant prophet and mystic who is a major force in America's spiritual renaissance, has stunning answers to that question. This is a not-to-be-missed book. *MFG*

START WHERE YOU ARE: A GUIDE TO COMPASSIONATE LIVING
by Pema Chodron, Shambhala, Boston and London, 1994, 154 pages, paperback, $12.00

Pema Chodron, an American Buddhist nun, is Director of Gampo Abbey, Nova Scotia, the first Tibetan monastery in North America established for Westerners. She has written a wise and joyful handbook on meditation practices that can help you cultivate fearlessness and awaken your compassionate heart.

"We already have everything we need," she writes. "There is no need for self-improvement. All these trips that we lay on ourselves—the heavy-duty fearing that we're bad and hoping that we're good, the identities that we so dearly cling to, the rage, the jealousy and the addictions of all kinds—never touch our basic wealth. They are like clouds that temporarily block the sun. But all the time our warmth and brilliance are right here. This is who we really are. We are one blink of an eye away from being fully awake." *PW*

HOLY DARING,
by Tessa Bielecki, Element, Rockport, MA, 1994, 127 pages, paperback, $9.95.

TERESA OF AVILA: MYSTICAL WRITINGS,
by Tessa Bielecki, Crossroad, NY, 1994, 203 pages, paperback, $11.95.

Men and women of any faith or no faith at all cannot help but find spiritual nourishment and delight in both of these books about the indefatigable and often outrageous Carmelite of Avila. The abbess-author—(rather a modern-day Teresa herself with her own "irrepressible zest for life" and "earthy mysticism")—captures eloquently the fiery, sensuous spirit that founded some 15 convents, wrote books printed and reprinted for almost four hundred years, and quite rightly became known as a saint, a Doctor of the Church, and one of the world's foremost authorities on the spiritual life.

Famous stories of Teresa's crashing out of "the comfort zone" and boldly following her uninhibited conscience have never been better told. "Teresa paid a high price to make her dreams come true," writes Bielecki, "financial insecurity, inadequate housing and help, poor health and arduous journeys" (on horseback, no less), but she made her dreams come true! *MFG*

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